

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

INSIDE VT WOOD

Reminder...

Remember to submit department news items by Friday 3 pm of each week to Will Pfeil at wpfeil@vt.edu for inclusion in Inside VT WOOD each Monday morning. All past issues of Inside VT Wood reside on our department website under the publications link.

Red Alert

Will Pfeil is on annual leave for two weeks exploring coconut utilization in Hawaii. There will be no delivery of Inside VT Wood for the week of October 23.

News From Paul Winistorfer

- Thank you to all who supported Wood Magic last Wednesday October 11 at the Brooks Center. Wood Magic continues to have significant impact locally with children and teachers. Next year is number 10! Dr. Audrey Zink-Sharp continues to orchestrate this event, with your help, as a very visible outreach activity of our program. Thanks Audrey and thanks to you all for your outward support of Wood Magic.
- Last Thursday October 12th was the majors fair. The department was well represented at this event. Thanks to Joe Loferski, Scott Renneckar, Linda Caudill, Jongkoo Han, Peter Hamner, Patrick Rappold, and others for helping to represent the department.
- We have a department meeting on Wednesday morning this week. (18th – 9:00 am Brooks Classroom). We have some very important business to discuss – please be in attendance. The meeting will last one hour. Dr. Eric Hallerman will be our guest for the first 15 minutes of the meeting.
- I presided over a WoodLINKS Board of Directors meeting last Friday in Chicago. The Forest Products Society will be discussing a strategic partnership with WoodLINKS at their upcoming board meeting in several weeks. The Virginia Forest Products Association has provided \$2,500 in seed money to organize regional meetings in Virginia to explore establishment of WoodLINKS sites in Virginia.
- Monday and Tuesday of this week I am in South Boston at the Higher Education Center working on a cooperative proposal regarding a unique partnership with our program in the Southside.
- We have approval to move forward with the search for Dr. Mark White's replacement; we also have approval to move forward with a new faculty position search. These will be discussed at the department meeting on Wednesday.

“Sustainable Infrastructure” Seminar

The Civil and Environmental Engineering Department will be hosting a seminar by:

**Dr. Chris Hendrickson on Friday, October 27th from
11:00 a.m. - noon in Torgersen Hall, Room 3100.**

The title of Dr. Hendrickson’s seminar will be “Sustainable Infrastructure”.

Dr. Hendrickson is Duquesne Light Company Professor of Engineering and Director of the Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research at Carnegie Mellon University.

General Announcements

American Indian Heritage Month Featuring Chris Eyre

We would like to invite you and your students to **An Evening with Chris Eyre, American Indian Heritage Month Featured Artist**, Thursday, October 19, 7:00 PM, Graduate Life Center Auditorium. Please join Chris Eyre for a screening of *Edge of America*. *Edge of America* is based on a true story about a Black educator who takes a job teaching high-school English at the Three Nations Reservation, and is coaxed into coaching the girl’s basketball team. A question & answer session and reception will follow.

Acclaimed director of the award-winning film *SMOKE SIGNALS*, Chris Eyre brings an exciting fresh perspective on the portrayal of Indians in mainstream Hollywood films and how the tide appears to be shifting to a more positive depiction of reality. Until Mr. Eyre made *SMOKE SIGNALS*, Indians were not portrayed by an Indian voice and did not have self-representation in mainstream films. Mr. Eyre is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. Sponsor: American Indian Heritage Month Steering Committee. Contact: Multicultural Programs & Services, mcps@vt.edu, 540-231-8584.

USDA-DOE Make Available \$4 Million for Biomass Genomics Research

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 12, 2006 - The U.S. Departments of Energy and Agriculture (DOE and USDA) today announced \$4 million for bio-based fuels research that will accelerate the development of alternative fuels. The departments issued a solicitation for research proposals for new plant feedstock genomics research projects. Dr. Ray Orbach, DOE Under Secretary for Science, made the announcement at *Advancing Renewable Energy: An American Rural Renaissance*, a conference jointly hosted by the two agencies in St. Louis.

“We are seeking to accelerate research breakthroughs that contribute towards making biofuels a cost-effective alternative to fossil fuels, with a goal of replacing 30 percent of transportation fuels with biofuels by 2030. Close and effective cooperation on research between the Departments of Energy and Agriculture will be an important element for the success of this effort,” Under Secretary Orbach said.

“This joint research initiative shows a commitment to acquiring new alternative energy resources and improving the efficiency with which biomass and plant feedstocks are used to produce renewable fuels such as ethanol,” Under Secretary of Agriculture Tom Dorr said.

The new funding continues a commitment, begun in 2006, to conduct a fundamental research program in biomass genomics, to provide the scientific foundation to facilitate the use of woody plant tissue, specifically lignocellulosic materials, for bioenergy and biofuels. Developing lignocellulosic crops for energy fuels could use less intensive production techniques and poorer quality land, thereby avoiding competition with food production on better quality land.

The program will take advantage of significant advances in breeding, molecular genetics and genomic technologies and build upon the existing knowledge base of plant biology to enable researchers to confidently predict and manipulate plants’ biological function for bioenergy resources.

In 2006, DOE’s Office of Biological and Environmental Research (OBER) and the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) National Research Initiative began the joint competitive grants program. The program focused on fundamental research on plants that will improve biomass characteristics and

yield or that will facilitate lignocellulosic degradation. In August 2006, the agencies awarded nine research grants totaling \$5.7 million spanning three years.

Information about the joint research program, the current solicitation and currently funded projects is available at www.genomicsgtl.energy.gov/research/DOEUSDA/. The solicitation is posted on www.grants.gov.

CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by supporting research, education and extension programs in the Land-Grant University System and other partner organizations. Visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov> for more information.

OBER manages a diverse portfolio of research to develop fundamental biological information and to advance technology in support of DOE's missions in biology, medicine and the environment.

Visit http://www.er.doe.gov/OBER/ober_top.html for more information.

The St. Louis conference was designed to get the best minds together - key stakeholders in biofuels, wind and solar energy - to discuss and ultimately help accelerate the research, development and deployment of alternative energy sources, the crux of President Bush's Advanced Energy Initiative.

USDA News

oc.news@usda.gov

202 720-4623